796 that day there is dam (beer) in every house and abundant meat,
527 and the inhabitants of nearby villages come to the festivities.

Here we shall describe only the two major festivals, tinsé and basgha.

Tinsé (Mossi Ritual Festival), or Naba Oubri Ma Kouré (The Funeral of Naba Oubri's Mother)

796 Origin. Naba Oubri, son of Zoungrana and [147] founder of
● 769 the Ouagadougou dynasty, gave his mother a very impressive kouré (funeral). The kouré took on the appearance of a great festival because of the large number of animals sacrificed, the generous supply of food, and the great quantity of beer (dam) prepared. Since Oubri was very powerful, he ordered that the anniversary of his mother's funeral should be celebrated every year, even after his death. His mother was Pogh'toe Hinga (literally, "bearded woman").

For this reason and also to obtain health for his people and abundant rain for their crops, the Mogho Naba still quite regularly celebrates this annual festival known as tinsé (from tinga "earth"). There is no set date for it; it is celebrated whenever possible, usually after the harvest.

796 Preparatory sacrifices. Before setting the date for the tinsé,
769 the Mogho Naba has livestock (cows, sheep) and roosters killed
782 on the tombs of his predecessors.

According to precedence, the sacrifices begin with Naba Zoungrana, Oubri's father, whose tomb is at Komtoega in the circle of Tenkodogo. The Mogho Naba sends a cow to the Loumbi-Raogo Naba to be sacrificed on the tomb of Naba Oubri. Oubriyaogo Naba (the guardian of Oubri's tomb) has the duty of sacrificing the animal.

The other animals are sacrificed by the Ouagadougou Naba, representing the family of the Ninissi (first [148] inhabitants of the country). He is accompanied by the eunuchs who are the guardians of the tombs (yad'nanamsé).

In order to honor emperors whose tombs are in various parts of the colony, representatives of the Mogho Naba are sent out with

796 sacrificial animals, and they are required to celebrate the festi-
769 val in these villages before returning to Ouagadougou.
782 In the old days the animals destined to be sacrificed were captured in the cantons by horsemen assigned to that duty. Today, however, the Mogho Naba requests his vassals to supply them.

It should be noted that the following Peulh chiefs provide cattle of their own volition and without any compulsion: Komtam Silmanaba, Gombogo Silminaba, Kourgou Silminaba, and Barkoundba Silminaba.

796 Setting the date for the ceremony. A week after the sacrifices
769 the emperor summons the Tansoba (war minister) or, if he cannot appear (sickness or some other chance reason), the Konkosé Naba. This personage must reply to the summons on the day he receives it.

796 The king then assembles his principal ministers and sets the
769 date for the celebration of the tinsé, twenty or twenty-one days
211 ahead. The Mogho Naba hands the Tansoba several knotted ropes (yoda) which are to be distributed by him to the following chiefs: [149] Sapone Naba, Tuili Naba, and Loumbila Naba.

The last-named chief hands his rope over to the Dapelgo Naba and to the Méguet Naba.

There are as many knots in the rope as there are days remaining until the festival.

As soon as the Tansoba has handed over the ropes, he must immediately return to his village.

The persons who have received the ropes are required to transmit them to the kombemba (plural of kombéré, canton chief) who untie a knot each day.

796 Celebration of the festival. Early on the day of the ceremony,
769 a Friday (arzouma), the ministers and other court officials present themselves before the king to wish him welcome (tabo).

796 The Mogho Naba presents a loaf of salt (yamss'néré, literally
769 "salt millstone") which is to be divided among the following dignitaries: Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, Kamsaongho
263 Naba, Bougretenga Naba, Benga Naba, Poé Naba, Tampouï Naba, Bend'Naba, and their followers.

Half of a loaf of salt is also offered to the Baloum Naba, Dapoya Naba, Samandé Naba, and Wedranga Naba.

796 769 263 The latter reserve a small share for the Zussoba [150] (chief eunuch) and the Bilbalsé (inhabitants of Bilbalogo, the section of the Baloum Naba).

796 769 The next morning, Saturday, the king has a large number of cattle slaughtered and many sagbo cakes prepared. The latter are piled one on top of another to form tahinsé (mountains) in the courtyard where the daily audiences are held.

On these mountains of sagbo are placed whole quarters of sheep. Many bowls of cooked rice are put in rows beside the millet cakes.

The Larrhallé Naba, the second minister who is in command of the Samandé (the court), stands before one of the mountains of sagbo, takes a cake which he divides into three parts, and tosses them at random in different directions in the courtyard. Thus he offers food to the invisible spirits and to the manes of previous ministers who once frequented the place. During this ceremony he utters some words which may be translated as follows: "Take this sagbo and bring peace and happiness to the emperor and to his people."

After this, the Larrhallé Naba returns to his kouga (mound of stones) to make way for the Gand'Naba. The latter, too, picks up a cake and also the foot of a cow. Then the king's bodyguard, the followers of the ministers, the Bilbalssé, and the emperor's servitors make a dash for the mountains of sagbo and the rice, and there is a general scramble to get the biggest piece. It goes without saying that they come out of the fray covered with sauce, and half of the food is spilled on the ground. [151]

At this point, the ministers and their escorts depart.

Each ikanda (head of a family) calls the family elder (the patriarch) and gives him a rooster and a goat (lacking a sheep) to be sacrificed to the manes of his ancestors. The old man pronounces the following words: "Youmd yelle n'ta, ta zagla yel t'm konfo, tif reg kouin gnimassem, la sounogo, ta pam kodo, la rogom (accept these offerings on the part of X... and grant him health, happiness, and prosperity. Protect his family and grant him good harvests and many children.

796 769 263 776 It is interesting to note that the meat, whether boiled or roasted, is never seasoned with red pepper (tiparé), for the tinsé [spirits]

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would visit their anger upon those who were guilty of such an indiscretion by making them blind or at least causing them severe eye trouble in later years.

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[261]

Everyone celebrates the tinsé at home by preparing all sorts of food (sagbo, rice, corn, beans, etc.). The people stuff themselves to the point of indigestion.

Thirty days after the anniversary celebration of the funeral of Oubri's mother, the Tansoba (war minister) returns to the emperor the rope used for the date of the tinsé.

Around the fortieth day, that is, a week after the departure of the Tansoba, the Loumbila Naba comes to salute the emperor. The latter gives him a cow to be slaughtered at Widin (section of the Ouidi Naba).

A week after the departure of the Loumbila Naba, [152] the Guilingou Tengsoba pays a visit to the Mogho Naba. We have already seen that it was an ancestor of this Tengsoba who asked Naba Zoungrana to send his son, Oubri, to administer the country and to help him drive out the Habé who today live by the cliffs of Bandiagara (Sudan). The Mogho Naba is obligated to give a cow and some salt to this Tengsoba.

Then comes the turn of the Saponé Naba (nayrdin, representative of Naba Kouda) who, with his followers, receives a cow and some salt. Finally, for Bonsa Naba, Kamsaonguin Tengsoba, and Pazani Tengsoba, the Mogho Naba has a sheep killed which is served with many plates of sagbo.

It should be noted that when the Tangsob-ramba appear before the emperor they put down their laya (magic axes) and are at once brought white roosters which they are expected to kill in the timpelem (courtyard).

Thus, it is apparent that this festival has no particularly remarkable features. Its sole aim is to make peace between the living and the dead and to give everyone a chance to eat well.

The Basgha of the Mogho Naba, or the Nights the Emperor M'ba (Rarengma) Sleeps Away from Home

(May my father not arrive before I do.)

769 782 796 The basgha. Before making use of his newly harvested crops, the Moaga ikanda (married man, head of a family) is obligated to offer this new produce to his ancestors. Therefore, he has dam (dolo, millet beer) prepared with the large red [153] millet, already sprouted, and cakes made with the millet or the sorghum. He kills chickens and a goat, or a ram, and invites his neighbors and relatives to the feast. He is convinced that the manes of his ancestors share the feast.

The emperor of the Mossi is no exception to this rule. The basgha of the Mogho Naba is celebrated with more pomp, and we shall describe it briefly below.

It should first be noted that there is no particular date set by custom for the basgha, either for the Mogho Naba or for the ordinary Moaga. Everyone celebrates it whenever he can after the harvest.

491 653 The sotasgo (completion of the road). Before the French came and the administration took over road building, each minister had a road or, more accurately, a broad path which led straight to the king's courtyard and which had to be maintained by the minister. Since everyone is busy in the fields during the winter months, it is easily understandable that the roads are somewhat neglected during that season. When the Mogho Naba decides to put everything to rights with his ancestors, he notifies the Ouidi Naba, his first minister, who sends word to the other ministers that they must clear their soyan (from soré, "path"). The ministers order the inhabitants of their respective sections to do the work, but put off completing the last stretch leading into the courtyard, samandé, [154] until the date for sotasgo is known.

653 Sotasgo takes place on a Saturday.

The Ouidi Naba makes a large pile of several loads of millet (kaguindi) and chooses about forty strong young men to carry it into the court of the king. His colleagues (Larrhallé Naba, Gounga

653 Naba, and Baloum Naba) do the same thing. (We have seen in an earlier chapter, under "Payments to the Mogho Naba" that the millet brought by the ministers and vassals makes up the food supply for the emperor and his wives; the harvest from his own fields is used to feed foreigners and to make beer for the basgha.)

533 In order to arouse the young men to greater efforts, drummers accompany them, playing "pang'rog'kamga, kamba komsomba (these young men were born of strength; they are worthy of their parents)."

Loads of millet are presented to the emperor during his first audience (wend'pous yan), after the ministers have paid their respects. The Soré Naba (literally, "chief of the path"), taking his place before the Mogho Naba, but with his back to him, orders the young men by the sound of drums to finish clearing the roads of the naba up to the king's courtyard. Since the work was virtually completed, this is a mere formality.

The ministers' followers and the bearers who brought in the millet, equipped with axes, daba, and even sticks, pretend to work energetically. They gesticulate, cry out, and [155] sing. The Soré Naba then goes under a shelter reserved for him, and the young men join him there.

796 The Ouidi Naba, the Larrhallé Naba, the Gounga Naba, and the
●769 Kamsaoug' Naba salute the emperor, and it is only then that the latter sets the date for the celebration of his basgha.

Once the date is set, the bodyguards of the Mogho Naba (samand' kamba), whose chiefs are Samandé and Rakogdo, are ordered to start at once to repairing the shelters in the courtyard where the daily audiences are held.

Sleeping away from home. Three days before the Feast of the Dead and as soon as he has given his pugtiéma (first wife) the sprouted millet for making dam (beer), the Mogho Naba becomes uneasy. This is because the kimsé (manes of his ancestors) are present in the house. He must find more peaceful lodgings.

On Wednesday evening, therefore, he goes to the home of the Samand'Naba of Kamsaoghin. He spends the night there, but at cockcrow the following morning he returns to his home where he spends the day. That night he goes to Gounghin and spends the night in a house near the home of the Gounga Naba, his third minister.

196 769 Friday night he stays at the home of Bangr'Naba Sambo. Very early Saturday morning he returns home in time to be present when the Bend'Naba (chief of the drummers) comes to wish him a happy new year and a long life and to pray that Wenam (God) will spare him to [156] offer many more bascé (plural of basgha) in honor of his predecessors.

[431] It goes without saying that during the nights spent away from home the emperor receives many visitors and substantial gifts. The persons at whose homes he spends the night naturally give him the warmest possible welcome.

Preparatory sacrifices. These are performed inside the house of the Mogho Naba, and the details are known only to the following four persons: Mogho Naba, Emperor of the Mossi; Baloum Naba, chief steward and chief of pages; Zussoba Kassanga, chief eunuch and guardian of the harem; the pugtiéma, the first wife of the Mogho Naba.

196 769 782 It is known that animals are sacrificed, with the Mogho Naba himself holding the victim and pronouncing the sacramental words. Perhaps there is also worship of certain sacred fetishes. In any event, we are convinced that there is nothing involved in the ceremony which is contrary to the principles of French civilization since there is no human sacrifice. We should have liked very much to describe these ancient practices, but the secret has been well kept.

196 769 533 Celebration of basgha. As soon as the Mogho Naba appears in front of the zango (antechamber), the Bend' Naba beats a drum while calling the names of deceased naba, beginning with Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty. [157]

As soon as the Bend'Naba stops playing, he and his followers are served sagbo (millet cakes), mouf (rice), dam (millet beer), and nemdo (meat).

196 769 [554] Likewise, the ministers and other court officials who come to greet tabo (the new year) are given dam, sagbo, rice, and meat by the Mogho Naba. The food is distributed to the dignitaries in the order of precedence, and the rest is reserved for the Bilbalessé and other followers of the ministers.

[516] About eight-thirty, the ministers and court officials say wennatassé, "God be with us," which means good bye, and then they return home.

169 they return to their homes.

796 The Bend'Naba and other drummers remain in the courtyard un-
533 til the Sogon' kassanga (chief eunuch) bring to them, on behalf of the emperor, the sum of 10,000 cowries and some beer. In the old days a young captive, seated amidst the cowries, accompanied these gifts. The messengers say to the drummers: "Nab'yet b'wa póustabo (the king sends us to give you these gifts on the occasion of his basgha)."

The chief of the drummers pours a drink for the Zussoba and orders his followers to play together "Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss'Naba nioré, Wenna wilig'vinré" (literally, "We thank the king for his gifts. May God give the Mogho Naba long life and allow us to come back to play here next year").

Before sending them away, the Mogho Naba is obligated to give a karfo (black robe [158] imported by the Haoussa) to the Bend' Naba and a robe to the Loun Naba (chief of the luinsé). Water with flour in it is likewise brought to the Bend'Naba, and he scatters it about the courtyard. The emperor is required by custom to walk upon this water of gnimassem (of good health) as he goes back to his apartments.

When all these formalities have been completed, the Bend'Naba, accompanied by his bards, takes his leave. The festival is over.

[431] On the days following, the drummers call on the ministers and the other court dignitaries and are given many gifts (cowries and livestock).

All of these gifts are retained by the Bend'Naba or by someone chosen by him, and they are distributed later, with due regard for the hierarchy existing among the griot. The share of the older men is always greater than that accorded to the younger ones. [159]

Chapter 10

The Wives of the Naba. The sogoné. The Pogsiouré

Naba Warga and the Origin of the Sogoné

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644 Naba Warga was constantly at war with the Riziam Naba, who
357 was called Mamzi (which means "I myself do not know"). He had

622 539 1. Ti'douda béleum villi n'pam n'dou. Those who wish to climb a tree seize the branches for support. /21/

2. Gigemdé sen touka séolro, wenniginamma, walpélronamma, nonga morbo, la'b zuéta gemdé. The lion digs up the salty earth (good to eat); the buffalo and koba /a kind of horse antelope/ like to eat it, but fear the lion. (The enemies of the Saman'Naba would like to take his place, but fear the naba.)

3. Kong'panga, bar'bala. Those who lack strength remain servants.

645 636 The appointment of the high ministers involves only a few gifts, offered during the festive days which last from the death of the minister to the nomination of his successor. The eldest son usually inherits the position, but the province chief may designate anyone he pleases.

636 Upon the death of the naba of Koupéla, a province chief, the ministers hold a council and decide among themselves who is to be his successor. The eldest son is nearly always chosen. Before the name of the man selected is announced, the head of the village section that bears the name Koupéla notifies the canton chiefs, who gather in the village of Koupéla. When everyone has arrived, the Tabrana /sic/ proclaims the name of the man chosen, and they all proceed to Bélousa to disclose their choice to the naba and to request his investiture. The naba of Bélousa usually accepts the man thus formally designated. If there is disagreement, or if he himself would prefer a different choice, he notifies the Moro Naba accordingly and indicates his own preferences; when his messenger returns, he proclaims the appointment, and everyone submits to his will. After all, he "has the strength." As badges of investiture, the naba of Bélousa presents the chosen man with a cap, a pair of shoes, and a scepter. The new naba still may not wear the cap, put on the shoes, or hold the scepter. He must proceed first to the grave of the ancestor of the [769] people, Naba Kourita, where he offers sacrifices, especially that of a cow. The festivities last for seven days, in the course of which millet beer flows freely and cattle is slaughtered in large numbers. In the course of these festivities the head of the chosen man is shaved, and he receives from the messengers of the naba of Bélousa the cap, shoes, and scepter; only then does he truly become a naba, with the right to

766 Suicides are buried like our dogs; here, all dogs are eaten. Lepers
761 are buried at night without festivities. Accidental death, whether
262 from a fall, snake bite, or any other cause, is attributed to an evil spirit who must not be irked by granting funerary honors to its victim, or else it would return and kill another member of the family. This is why those who die of an accident are buried without ceremonies and without undertakers. Their heads are not shaved, because God has called them with their hair on, as the Mossi say. A pit is dug, they
769 are buried, and that is all. They have no one to represent them; to the anniversary of their death, the koure, they have no kourita.

Every Mossi who dies of illness, be it man, woman, child, or naba, survives in the person of the kourita. In the case of a married man, the kourita or koutoarsa (who imitates the deceased) is a woman of the dead person's family, usually one of the wives of one of his younger brothers, someone who bears a certain resemblance to the deceased. She is chosen by the family, and sometimes designated by the dying person. She wears the clothes of the deceased, his shirt, his blanket, his hat, his shoes, his bracelets, and his rings; she wears his belt and knives, walks with his staff, his hoe, his dore, and bears his spear, blade pointing toward the ground. She walks like the person she represents. She must imitate him in every way and keep his presence alive in the household. If the deceased was usually accompanied by a /73/ child bearing his satchel, the kourita is followed by the same child bearing the same satchel, but turned inside out. If the deceased was a leper and had no fingers, she pretends not to have any; if he liked to laugh, she laughs; if he was peevish and quarreled with everyone, she maintains a constant state of anger. The children of the deceased call her their father; the wives call her their husband and prepare her millet mush. If the dead man was a naba, she is called naba; if he was not, she is called by the name of the deceased.

769 She acts in this manner until the day of koure. On that day she
428 shaves her head like the other members of the family, and her role ends there. She retains the name kourita, however, and on the day when the inheritance is distributed, she receives a garment in exchange for the clothes of the deceased. If the heir is generous, if the inheritance allows it, she is given some livestock, sometimes a child. It is said that the kourita dies sooner than if she had not played this role, because the ancestral spirits will come and fetch her. For this reason, the position is not in great demand.

769 In addition to this kourita, if the deceased was head of the household, his oldest daughter, or in her absence, his granddaughter, [184] occasionally plays a role and is also called kourita, but this custom is less widespread. Her mourning clothes are embellished with thin cords of red straw (bini) around the neck and wrists and above the elbow and at the ankles, 13 for a man and 14 for a woman. Around her head she wears cotton threads (pana) which hang down her back like a long tail, ending in a pompon. The first kourita, previously mentioned, sometimes wears these badges also. This second kourita actually has only one task, namely, to plant large millet where her father's huts stood. When the millet is ripe, she sets it aside to use for preparing millet beer on the day of the kouré. Sometimes her position is held for three years, and she cannot shave during this time. To offset this, it is she who brews the beer for the Day of the Dead (basra). At the end of three years, she shaves and takes up her usual way of life. No such kourita is provided for an old woman, since she was not the head of a household.

A mother is kourita for a child who dies before he marries. She wears at her ankle a thin cotton cord to which she adds a knot daily [801] for the duration of mourning, 33 days for a boy, 44 days for a girl.

The Moro Naba has a kourita like other Mossi, but on the day of the kouré a young boy of his family is appointed to represent him for life. This kourita adopts the name of the dead naba, and all through the dry season he goes from canton to canton, as the true Moro Naba could not do in his lifetime. Everywhere he is greeted and entertained with great honors, he receives many gifts, and his men loot what they can. One place only is closed to him, Ouagadougou, the residence of his successor. If they were to meet, one of them would die within the year. At present there are among the Mossi two kourita of Moro Nabas: that of Naba Sanem, who welcomed Binger, and that of Naba Sigri, enthroned as a result of Voulet's conquest and deceased in 1905. Naba Wobro, deposed by our troops, has no kourita because he was [643] no longer Moro Naba when he died; he had failed tradition by leaving Ouagadougou and thereby renounced his rights as a sovereign.

/74/ The first funeral is a temporary expedient; the human body decomposes quickly, and the burial has to be held before all the friends and relatives can be assembled. Also, death comes by surprise; there are not enough cowries, the animals have not been gathered in sufficient numbers, and the deceased must be granted the honors due his rank, he must be offered numerous victims. These are the reasons

769 for the koure, which for lack of a better term we have called an anniversary, although the festivities may be held a few days after the burial if everything is ready.

769 The koure is always celebrated on Sunday. The kourita, the eldest
767 son, or the head of the family first sets a date, but this is not the real date. A few days later he discloses the true day to everyone. Relatives and friends gather on Saturday for a gala family dinner of meat, salt, beer, and sarabo. Sunday at daybreak the women wail, weep, and shriek. At dawn the members of the deceased person's family shave their heads, mark themselves with stripes of ashes, and don mourning clothes, exactly as they did on the day of the death. Around noon, each of the relatives and friends brings an animal as an offering to the deceased. The undertaker (lada) presents it. First he takes the sheep given by the eldest son and stands before the door of the hut in which the body was laid after death. Three times he offers the sheep by making it move forward and back, while saying: "Your son gives you a sheep. Take it and eat it with your whole family." Then he seizes the sheep and holds its jaws shut to prevent it from bleating. Helpers drag the sheep out of the inner courtyard and slit its throat. An old woman comes to catch the blood in a gourd. The meat is cooked separately, while the blood mixed with millet flour is cooked with the viscera, liver, lungs, and some salt. This is the semdlé, of which all members of the family must partake. This is one of the customs to which the Mossi are most attached. While the oldest son's sheep is butchered and prepared, each of the children presents his victim to the undertaker, who offers it to the deceased as before. Then comes the turn of other relatives and friends.

When all the animals have been offered, the undertaker takes some beer from a jar which has stood in the sun and empties a gourdful onto the grave. The rest of the jar is his. The remainder of the day
769 is devoted to the slaughter of all the victims, which vary in number according to the wealth and fame of the deceased, to cooking them, eating them, and drinking. In the evening, one of the dead man's daughters takes a gourd full of water, places it on her head without a pad, and walks three times around her father's soukala, shrieking and weeping. All those present follow her and blend their wails with hers. She returns to the inner courtyard and pours the water from her gourd into the pot where the millet mush is cooking. If the head of the household had a dog, the animal is now killed and eaten. The whole night is spent in endless dances and games.

769 On Monday millet beer is prepared for Wednesday, and the dances and games continue, as they do on Tuesday. On this day all the wives of the dead man vanish, because they must not witness the ceremony of pounding the grave that will take place on the following day.

/75/ On Wednesday morning the whole family goes to the grave 769 with paddles, accompanied by drummers and the undertaker. The 767 women have brought water, and everyone pounds the earth over the grave, on top of which an earthen pot is left in the case of a woman, a stone in the case of a man. When the grave has been thoroughly pounded, the undertaker kills a chicken on the stone or pot and says: "Take the chicken from the grave, eat it with your family, and leave your children in peace." Then he takes a gourd of beer and pours it over the grave. The chicken is roasted and eaten, and the jar of beer is drunk on the spot. Everyone returns to the house of the deceased, and the games and dances are taken up with renewed vigor.

769 On Thursday the whole family goes to market and thanks the friends who have assisted at the festivities and who have helped them.

The funeral ceremonies are now over, and there will be no further ado about the deceased except once a year on the Day of the Dead.

Young men or girls who die childless also have a koure, usually on the same day as an old man or woman who died previously. If no one in the family has recently died, the children's koure is carried out without ceremonies. The father, mother, and younger siblings shave and build a small hut which represents the hut of the deceased, and this is where the chickens or sometimes a goat are offered to him. Millet beer, of course, is distributed to the relatives and friends who are present, but there is no dancing and no pounding of the grave.

766 Ostensibly the death of a naba is not known, and the poor man is buried without ceremony. When his heirs have gathered all that is needed to give their father a funeral worthy of him, they have the news of his death spread everywhere on a Saturday morning. A dummy built with the dead man's clothes is laid in the hut of his first wife or in his own hut, and all the ceremonies are carried out Saturday night as they would be for any other important burial. The dummy is carried like a corpse; the soil covering the pit is disturbed slightly, and the clothes are buried there. On the following day, Sunday, all 769 the koure ceremonies are held, and their solemnity is proportional to the naba's power.

Thus everyone has his koure, with the exception of nursing children, who will soon return, and of suicides.

776 makes noise in the bush under certain leafy trees, his cheeks will swell
753 out. The tisé talk, even during the day. It is their voices which are heard when the wind stirs the leaves. We had /81/ papaw seeds planted all around our dwelling. They had sprouted and grown well; the fruit was already ripening. One morning, no papaw trees were left in
[824] Koupéla! The naba had decreed that these were talking trees, that they would cause illness to those who had them in their soukala ... and the papaws had been cut down!

776 Fortunately, it is possible to protect oneself against the tisé. First,
782 those trees which shelter them may be felled, and the spirits will move elsewhere. Some very beautiful trees vanish thus from the villages. The tisé may also be appeased with sacrifices. Does this result in tree cult, dendrolatry? Indeed not! The Mossi clearly make the distinction between the tree and the spirit that inhabits it, and they sacrifice to the spirit. Sometimes also, a tree was planted on the
[769] grave of the elder who founded the village, and sacrifices are made to the ancestral spirit at the foot of the tree. Finally, there are fetishes more powerful than the tisé. It is enough to know which roots and barks the tisé do not like, to steep them in water, and to place the pot at the door of the hut. When a tiga sees this fetish, he invariably runs away. Some Peul are said to have the power to distinguish between those trees where spirits dwell and those where they do not, and to kill the former trees merely by rubbing them with butter! This must be done in a special way.

776 The kikirsi are imps, red or black all over, and only a few centi-
754 meters high. Their body has the same shape as ours, but it is much nimbler and more tenuous—something ethereal and impalpable that only the sorcerers can discern. The latter call them with a low whistle or by shaking a peculiarly shaped gourd that looks like a handle
[534] ending in a sphere. This gourd is dried without being opened, and the seeds gather in the sphere. The sorcerer makes noise by shaking this instrument, and the kikirsi flock to him singing.

776 There are good and evil kikirsi, and the good ones only do evil when forced to do so; for instance, when someone puts pepper in their sauce. They abhor pepper but they love honey, and every good housewife who wishes to preserve her honey covers it carefully with pepper to prevent the kikirsi from eating it. They are inordinately fond of sesame, and they dote on millet cakes (samsa); every woman who makes millet cakes offers them a few. People who eat samsa while walking are careful to drop a few crumbs to the ground. On the

775 it aside to return it to the soul when it leaves the body. From this
[735] comes the thank-you wish, "May God repay you!" If the deceased led an evil life, if he was quarrelsome or a thief, if he killed, he is condemned to walk over live coals to reach God, or if he is a murderer, he may come to God only after he has drunk all the blood he has shed, which God has saved for this purpose. The major offenders are detained by the treetops and never reach the place of souls. It must be said, however, that most Mossi take little heed of the penalties which may await them in the other life or deny their existence altogether.

The souls go to Bourtenga, the "gathering place of the souls," according to the etymology of the word, a place of indeterminate geographical location, or they go to Pilimpikou, a mountain located
775 in Kipirsi country. Their sole occupation over there is to go to market
764 at night, and this is why on the day of burial the deceased is given cowries so that he may buy millet beer and clothes in order not to look like a tramp.

The souls are white but otherwise they look like men, although they are nimbler and can move effortlessly and with great rapidity
[264] from one place to another. They do everything upside down; they eat with the left hand and do with it all the things we do with the right, and this is why the corpse is washed with the left hand. They wear their clothes inside out, with the pocket of the breechcloth facing in; they carry the spears iron downward, and they walk backwards because their eyes are placed behind their head. This is why the kourita who represents the deceased wears everything inside out.

775 The souls of the animals sacrificed to him, chickens, sheep, goats,
769 beeves, etc., go to join the deceased, who can thus feast, invite friends, and gather kin together, for people are reunited up there. Although nabas are no longer such, those who were subject to them on earth recreate their court. It is said that parents come to fetch their children, /87/ nabas their pages and favorite wives, and friends their friends, unless the survivors treat them very well and provide them with lots of food.

Indeed, the souls of the dead come back to earth to receive the gifts which are offered to them, to drink the blood of the victims sacrificed in their honor and the millet beer prepared for them on the annual Day of the Dead (basra). This is why no Mossi faithful to tradition ever drinks millet beer without first pouring a little on the

775 ground; he also pours what is left at the bottom of the gourd, so the
769 souls will rejoice with him. It is considered a great honor when a
[554] naba tells an elder to grasp one side of the gourd and to pour along with him.

775 One must not laugh about the souls of the deceased and their visits
761 to earth. If you doubt their return, listen to what an old naba once told me. "One day, I had gone to visit a naba, my friend and neighbor. We had arranged to meet at his house with another neighboring chief. He gave us a very nice welcome, and the day was most pleasant. We were resting at night in the shelter of his soukala when we were suddenly awakened by the sound of harness bells and horses galloping. On the following day we left our host. No sooner had we left than he took ill. A week later he died. The souls had come to fetch him. Oh! Father, do not laugh about the souls of the deceased!" And the good old man trembled with emotion. This is what our Mossi believe. They firmly believe in all these ghost stories.

775 Are the souls reincarnated? Small children who die before the age of reason are said to return in the person of the first child borne by their mother. This is why, especially if the mother has lost several
[304] children in a row, the baby is marked at birth with distinctive signs,
[764] particularly tattooings on the belly and lower back; sometimes, if he dies, a piece of his ear is cut off, or a toe or finger joint broken. It is said that the child born next will bear the same marks, but no living example of this could be cited. Often, the mother leaves the hut where her baby died. An old woman spreads ashes before the door in the evening, and if small footprints are found in the morning, it is a sign that the child came back and wishes to return to his mother's bosom.

Rebirth is not granted to anyone other than young children, not even to young unmarried people. They remain in the place of the souls for years on end, the number of which cannot be ascertained, and no distinction is made between the rich and the poor, the powerful and their subjects.

775 The soul of suicides, cursed in death, is not entitled as a rule to
762 funeral ceremonies. It wanders through the world without harming anyone, but unable to find rest.

577 Morality is reduced to its simplest expression. Whatever harms
673 other people is bad. Think your own intimate thoughts and desire anything you like; as long as you do no harm to your fellow man, no fault has been committed. Fornication and adultery are faults only

789 Blessings and curses are also used. Should they be classed with the cult, or with magic? One way or the other, there are natives who have the power to kill anyone merely by saying a word. They can make the harvest wither, the cattle sicken. There are also some who can bless, make a trip propitious, an undertaking successful. If you 752 are wounded, go to them. They will put around the wounded part of 755 your body a greasy rope with three or four knots according to your sex; 801 there will be no swelling, and the wound will heal quickly.

782 Such are the major sacrifices and the practices of the cult. The 769 sacrifices offered to the spirits of the dead on the day of burial or on 796 the day of kouré have not been mentioned, because the animals offered are not properly speaking sacrificed (kou mando) but offered, presented, fabré. We shall now mention the sacrifices made on the Day of the Dead.

The Koupéla Mossi have two major feast days: the Day of the Dead or basra, and the Moslem sheep celebration called kibsa. Both are intimate family affairs.

Basra is the feast of the dead. On that day every family head must offer sacrifices to his ancestral spirits, and he alone may sacrifice upon the grave. Even if a member of the family has become powerful and wealthy, he will not offer the sacrifice which devolves by right to the family head. All members of the family who wish to offer a sacrifice on the ancestral grave must, therefore, go to their elder on that day. Anyone may sacrifice to the kikirsi and tangandé, and almost everyone does at this time. It is mainly on this occasion that little children may be seen gravely sacrificing their chicken to their kikirsi and to the tangandé; each makes it a point of honor to offer his own animal. Only chickens are sacrificed on that day.

Basra is not celebrated by every family on the same day. Some celebrate it before the province chief does, others after him, while most families do it on the same day he does.

/96/ The naba of Koupéla proceeds as described below, and the ceremonies are the same for his subjects with the sole difference that being less wealthy they cannot offer as many sacrifices. The basra is always celebrated by the naba on a Saturday. Already on Thursday he has taken non-fermented beer from the vats and poured it on the graves of his father and grandfather. He has also sacrificed a chicken on each of the tombs. Wherever an ancestor of the naba is buried, the guardian of the grave sacrifices a chicken. This is repeated on

782 Friday evening. The sacrifice is the usual one described earlier, but
769 the invoking formula is replaced with the following: "Soul of my
796 father, stretch out your hand and take this chicken which I offer you; grant me to reach next year in good health, and I will return with another chicken." The chicken killed on the grave is not roasted as in other sacrifices, but cooked in water.

On those days one must be careful not to sleep outside. The souls come to drink beer from the vats, and woe to those who lie in their way. They will kill them or at least make them seriously ill.

782 On the feast day itself, all those who have some obligation toward
769 the naba or toward the man who is holding the festivities, such as
796 those to whom he has given a wife or who have asked him for one,
431 come to greet him with a rooster and cowries if they did not come on the previous day. Many of his subjects, especially the canton chiefs, also come to offer their rooster and cowries. On the other hand, if an important visitor comes on that day, it is an elementary rule of civility to offer him a rooster.

782 Usually, on the very day of the festivities, no sacrifices are offered
769 on the graves. The victims are offered to the protective kikirsi of
796 the hut, of the inner courtyard, of the outer courtyard, of the whole soukala. The number of sacrificed chickens varies in proportion to the number of gifts. When the sacrifices are over, the naba assembles his people, and the beer is brought in and presented to him. He first pours a little on the ground as an offering to the ancestral spirits, then he drinks and distributes the ars among his people. This is not
[273] a good day to discuss important matters, because after noon everybody is more or less drunk.

On the following Monday and Wednesday, the naba proceeds at dawn with great pomp to two neighboring villages (Nakalbo and Sabré) to sacrifice a beef to the tangandé. Much feasting ensues there on those two days; the naba loses a beef /in each village/ but gains many chickens and a few thousand cowries. He also goes to the village of Toulgou on the day when basra is celebrated in that locality, because his family originated there.

527 The kibsa is the Moslem sheep feast, and it is celebrated forty days after the end of the great feast. All Mossi celebrate it in private; every family has brewed millet beer, and on that day millet mush is replaced with rice and meat. These festivities are even more intimate than the previous ones in the sense that they are held

754 accused of eating the souls of little children, and I have known some who boasted of possessing this power!

The tibo are a family of sorcerers. People are born tibo, and the village they inhabit is called Tibin. The naba of this village has the special faculty of discerning all sorts of things, especially whether someone has an enemy, merely by gazing into a gourd filled with water in which a certain charm has been placed. A chicken was previously sacrificed on the gourd. This naba, and he alone, can also kill at a distance. To obtain his protection, it is necessary to bring him a goat, a chicken, millet flour mixed with water, and millet beer. Sooner or later the one designated will die! If it takes too long, the sorcerer always has an excuse handy..

754 The village of Tibin contains a hut where the tibo fetishes are lined
778 in a row. These fetishes consist basically of clay pots containing water, branches, and tree leaves. They are covered with clay gourds of the kind used to cook sauce, and the sacrifices are made on these gourds. It is said that there are snakes and turtles in the pots, but only the tibo sorcerers can see them. Every village has its tibo jar in the naba's household, either at the door of his hut or hanging inside. These tibo are the dwellings of powerful kikirsi.

754 /106/ The bartibo are professional dancers. They have the faculty
771 of distinguishing while dancing those who have the power of killing
535 people, whether poison-givers or seuya. The bartibo themselves claim to have the power of riding the wind and going to kill anyone they wish. They specialize, however, in child-bearing charms for the benefit of sterile women.

754 The waongo also belong to a special family. People are born tibo,
292 bartibo, waongo, or nyonnyonga. For their ceremonies, the waongo don garments made of the bark of baobabs which cover them completely. These strange garments completely conceal the person. A figure may be seen walking, but the person cannot be recognized, and a dreadful illness threatens those who dare to strike it. This is why people, when they see these shapeless forms, run away as fast as they can.
769 The waongo wear masks when they celebrate the koure (death anniversary) of another waongo. They can ride the wind and inflict diseases; they can even kill if they wish.

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
FA28 Mossi FA28

they are so exclusively occupied with political or religious duties. In every case, they own fields and are dependent upon their produce for an important part of their subsistence.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga holds a market every third day; markets operate in nearby villages on the intermediate days. There are few full-time merchants; men usually market their wares themselves and trade in items of European manufacture. Except for the sale of meat, it is a man's wives who sell farm produce. For marketing her husband's surplus millet, a woman receives a gift when the market closes.

Markets are most active in the early hours of the morning when meat and farm produce are fresh. By afternoon only a few merchants stay on, trying to sell their remaining produce to late-comers at greatly reduced prices. Social satisfactions derived from participation in the market are greatly valued; it provides an opportunity for meeting friends and kinsmen and for exchanging gossip and observations on one another's dress, the crops, and current political developments. The market is a place for making loans and receiving small gifts from kinsmen and friends, for flirtations and the arrangement of rendezvous, and for that casual sort of social interaction which is one of the principal pleasures of life in the Yatenga.

The Mossi farmer is dependent on the co-operation of the members of his lineage both for the success of his individual economic endeavor and for their support if his crop should fail. To be assured of this support, he must contribute generously to the maintenance of his position in the intricate network of rights and obligations which describes the relationship of the individual to his kin group. A constant exchange of visits and presents, ceremonial and economic assistance, and presence and participation in the affairs of the lineage are necessary to maintain his status within this group.

The nature of the social, economic, and emotional dependence of the individual on his kinsmen, his affinal relations, and his neighbors is such that his social well-being and economic success may properly be regarded as depending as much on his skill in manipulating this complex web of relationships as on his specifically economic endeavors. When a man decides to forego a second weeding of his fields in order to prepare presents and make the journey to the funeral of a kinsman, he is making a choice which, considered in the total context of the culture, is realistically in accord with his own economic best interest.

The farmer feels equally dependent on the deceased members of his lineage, the ancestral spirits (*kiemse*). If he feeds them a chicken, they may steal the soul from a neighboring stand of millet and bring it to enrich his own field. If properly treated, they can be depended upon to protect his shea nut trees from the high winds which might otherwise

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
FA28 Mossi FA28

769 destroy the yield. And, depending on his attentions to them, they can give or take away the good health necessary to carry him through the arduous activity of the rainy season when work is hardest, the granaries nearly empty, and food in short supply. Separate ancestral spirits look out for different aspects of the well-being of the individual. Satisfying their various sacrificial requirements is both expensive and time-consuming, but their good will is essential to the success of the farmer, and it is in his own best interest to be attentive to their needs.

THE EARTH CUSTODIANS

793 A close relationship exists between the control of the water supply
776 upon which the agricultural economy depends and the authority of the earth custodians in their role as intermediaries with the several manifestations of Wennam, the Mossi deity. The deity itself is somewhat aloof from the affairs of men, but through his specific manifestations and with the intercession of the earth custodians (*Tenga Soba namba*), descendants of the indigenous inhabitants of the Yatenga, the individual propitiates Wennam in order to control the various forces of the natural and supernatural environment upon which the success of his economic or social endeavor is dependent. Tenga Wende, his terrestrial manifestation, and Tido Wende, which gives life to the vegetable kingdom, are the aspects of Wennam which are most frequently evoked; but Siguiri Wende, the deified first ancestor of the Mossi; Ki Wende, the millet god; and Saga Wende, the rain deity, are also frequently called upon for help.

793 Each Mossi village in the Yatenga is divided into one or more areas,
[36] each of which is in the "command" of one of the village earth custodians. Each of these areas contains both the dwelling of the Savadogo lineage of the earth custodian and the residence and farmlands of various "true" Mossi lineages. The head of each lineage maintains the good will of the terrestrial manifestation of the deity through the intercession of the earth custodian who "commands" his land. In some instances a lineage may own land under the authority of two different earth custodians; in this case offerings must be made at the shrine (*tenga*) of each.

793 The good fortune which may be secured through obeisance to the
782 terrestrial manifestation of the deity (Tenga Wende) involves both sacrifices and gifts of money to the earth custodian and abstention from acts offensive to the earth. For example, sexual intercourse may take
[833 place only in a private courtyard or within the house. Violation of this
783] rule defiles the land and must be expiated through a special sacrifice and the payment of a fine to the earth custodian. Any lost object found in the
778 public way or in the bush is in the custody of the earth deity and must be turned over to the earth custodian to await the inquiry of the proper owners. If such objects are unclaimed, they are given to Tenga Wende

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
FA28 Mossi FA28

time. "Waraga," which means "first cultivation," is the name given to the fifth. The sixth, which appears in early September or late August, is called "Baca," meaning "second cultivation."

If the millet is not yet ripe for harvest at the appearance of the seventh moon, it is also called "Baca," since the work of cultivation must continue. This choice rests with the chief of the village of Room. The entire Mossi kingdom waits for his decision to know whether the ceremonial cycle called "Basga," which closes the economic year, is to begin or whether the harvest and its attendant ceremonies are to be put off for another month. Just behind his residence is a sacred millet field whose grains, as they mature, contain an aspect of the souls (*riim shiise*) of the dead kings of the Yatenga. When the millet in this field is ready to be cut, the next moon to appear is called "Yalem," and the ceremonial cycle which closes the economic year is begun. In the early days of the Yatenga dynasty millet from this field was used to prepare a sacrificial gruel to propitiate the deceased rulers of the newly established kingdom. When it is cut today, a first portion is taken to the altar at Room dedicated to the souls of these early kings. Two other bundles of millet are prepared from the same field. One is sent to the *Yatenga Naba* at Ouahigouya, who is the living descendant of the dead kings. The other is sent to the village of Gourcy, the former capital and the first residence of the founder of the Yatenga dynasty, Naba Yadiga.

The emissaries to the two political centers are accompanied by young people who break off stalks of millet from the fields along their way, adding these to the bundles of grain so as to include all of the farmers of the Yatenga in this offering which symbolizes the dependence of the Mossi on the benevolence of the souls of the dead kings and their living descendant. The millet taken to Ouahigouya is sacrificed at the palace altar of the former rulers. Part of the millet sent to Gourcy is sacrificed at the altar of the spirits of the former village chiefs (*nakom shiise*); the other part is sacrificed at the shrine of the former kings. At Ouahigouya and Gourcy a portion of each sacrificial offering of millet is returned to Room with stalks from the local crop at each place. These are used to make a final sacrifice symbolizing the interdependent relationship of Mossi religious, economic, and political organizations. The ceremonial cycle serves to demonstrate the reliance of the people on the benevolence of the spirits of their former kings for their social, economic, and supernatural well-being.

A ceremony called "Kom Filiga" follows. Meaning "water thanksgiving," it is the occasion for thanking the Mossi ruler, the *Yatenga Naba*, for the wise direction of affairs which has permitted the farmers to cultivate their fields in peace. All village and canton chiefs travel to Ouahigouya to salute their king and rededicate themselves to his service.

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
FA28 Mossi FA28

The next moon, called "Tido," is the occasion for a ceremony thanking Wennam, through his terrestrial and vegetal manifestations, for his support during the growing season and for the rich harvests that have been received. Though it is directed by the custodians of the earth, it is their auxiliaries, the Bogaba, who officiate and who sacrifice at the altars to Tido Wende. After they have finished, others may offer a chicken as thanks for successful harvests or for the birth of a child.

At the appearance of the next moon the ceremony called "Filiga" is celebrated, thanking the ancestors of each lineage for their protection during the hard months of the rainy season. The initial sacrifices are made by the village chief both at the shrine to the spirits of the former chiefs and at the ancestral shrine of his lineage. Because their offerings are made to powerful spirits, it is wiser not to refer directly to them by name. They are called *Kikirigo Na Maore*, which means "twin dance." The twin spirits, like the ancestral spirits (*kiemse*), give children. Thus, through indirection a "charged" word is avoided by calling the sacrifice after an analogous but less powerful force. The specific purpose of the first sacrifice is to ask the protection and the assistance of the spirits of the former chiefs during the dangerous period which is to follow. The ancestral spirits of the villagers are then propitiated, and individuals who fail to perform the sacrifices properly may be punished by their ancestors. It is also believed that the ancestors may try to call some of the members of the lineage to join them at this time.

The sacrifices are made by the children of the daughters of the lineage (*Yasenamba*), whose permissive relationship with their mother's kinsmen is paralleled by their relationship to the ancestral spirits of their lineage. The lineage head presents the first chicken for sacrifice. Its throat is slowly cut as it is offered to the "twin" (*kikirigo*), as the "first ancestor" of the lineage is called—again through indirection, for even if the name of the first ancestor were known, it would be presumptuous of his descendants to call him by name. A chicken is then sacrificed to the "old ancestors" of the great-grandfather's generation, to the ancestors of the grandfather's generation, and to those of the fathers' generation who are deceased. As each chicken's throat is cut, the ancestors are thanked for their protection throughout the rainy season and requested to continue to look out for the welfare of their descendants during the months of the dry season which follow. Other men of the lineage may then give chickens to be sacrificed.

The final aspect of the ritual closing of the economic year is the ceremony called "Na Poosum," or "chief's salutation." It is essentially a social occasion. The homage to the central political authority made at Kom Filiga is now complemented on the village level. The elders of each lineage go to the village chief with presents of millet and assurances of

764 down on the chest of the deceased. Then they spread out on the boards a layer of clay, and add earth until the hole is filled. A small canari is placed on the grave to mark its location.

Other members of the soukala are buried around it in the maize field. A canari is also placed upon the grave. The same applies to slaves. Only people stricken with sleeping sickness are buried [766] in the bush, to prevent the spread of the disease.

The deceased is buried on the morning following the day of his death. The heir of the deceased soukala chief and the family elders kill chickens upon the grave. They take the animals by the legs and crush their skull on the floor of the grave. This is the liturgical procedure for such killings. Nine chickens are thus killed [536] in succession and set aside to be eaten. If the soukala is wealthy, sheep are killed instead of chickens. They are seized by their hind legs and their head is struck three times on the floor of the grave, then their throat is cut with a knife. The souls of all those animals go to the deceased.

On the night following the burial, people people play drums, shriek, dance, shoot guns. When day breaks everyone returns home to wash, rest, and eat. Then they return when the sun sets, and this goes on for three successive nights.

765 When the ceremony is over, the date of a new reunion is set for 30, 40, 60 days or even a year later. This second ceremony is often made to coincide with the time of the millet harvest. The children of the deceased have their heads shaved. Much to is prepared. The sisters and daughters who have married away come on the date set, bringing sheep and dolo. The family and the whole village come to greet the successor of the deceased soukala head, to drink and to eat. The griot and large drums are sent for. People make music, dance, sing, and drink for two days, and /587/ this time there is no weeping. This second reunion ends the funeral ceremonies occasioned by someone's death.

769 The Mossi have a yearly feast for their dead and their ancestors. It is the Tiougou or Bassara, which is also called Péléga in other areas. This feast is celebrated in December, when all the millet has been harvested and the cold weather has come. The family and soukala heads have much dolo prepared and pour it onto the graves

769 along with millet flour mixed in water. A few chickens are also killed. No one works on that day, but people eat, drink, and rest. There is no drumming or dancing, however.

Other Mossi (at Yakki, for example) make offerings to the ancestors in the hut of their first wife rather than on the graves.

Another feast comes at sowing time and is called Tengana. Certain leaves are sought in the bush, cooked with beans and underground peas, and eaten. Much dolo is also preapred.

241 On the first day of sowing, one goes to the fields and offers a 776 chicken, millet flour, and dolo to the field stones (tenkougouri) and to the earth (tenga or tempeloun), so the sowing will go well, so there will be a good harvest, and so everyone will be in good health.

There is also an earth feast or Tensé (plural of tenga), which is celebrated once a year during the rainy season. It is the Moro Naba who sets the exact date of the Tensé. Every soukala head [783] kills a beef, a sheep, or a chicken. The young men collect the blood of the sacrificed animals in gourds and pour some upon the ground (to the Earth) in order to secure a good crop. The remainder is mixed with the flour of large white millet and eaten. Much dolo is consumed. The earth feast is the special festivity of those people who are called Tenga (earth), Tembila, Tenfisi, etc., and of those who were born on the day of the Tensé.

On that day sacrifices are also offered to Naba Ouondé (the Chief God).

/588/ On years when the previous millet harvest was bad, the Tensé is not celebrated.

The Mossi have no special harvesting feast. Actually, it is the Tiougou or Bassara (celebrated when the millet has been harvested) that is the harvesting feast as well as the feast of the ancestors.

782 The Mossi do not offer sacrifices to isolated trees, but they do 778 to sacred groves or woods.

At Ouagadougou, at the spot where the White Fathers now live, there once stood a small sacred wood made up of large trees and thorny bushes, where sacrifices were offered before the French tore it down.

Every year the Moro Naba offered a sheep and a chicken to this sacred grove through the head of the Sékou quarter. He also offered

562 When she dies, a woman's property goes to her children. The
428 objects used by women go to the daughters (bracelets, skirt cloths), while other items (animals, etc.) go to the sons. More exactly, the first-born is favored among the sons and the oldest girl among the daughters. If there are no children, the husband does not take anything, and whatever the wife leaves goes to her family, to her sisters and brothers in the first line of descent. Not having had any children by the deceased, the husband would be ashamed to take what she left.

837 Adultery. —The wife owes faithfulness to her spouse. Unfaithfulness, however, is not very important, for unless it occurs repeatedly it does not usually result in a break. The husband merely beats his wife and scolds her.

837 When the wife has fled to a lover, her husband goes in search of
684 her. The lover will have to provide a sheep (the sheep may be re-
782 placed by a goat), a chicken, and two canari of dolo, all of which
769 are to be sacrificed to the ancestors so they will forgive the woman. She cannot re-enter her house until the sacrifice has been performed; without it the ancestors would kill her. They are unbending, more so than the husband to be sure, about the latter's honor. Should a husband know his wife to be guilty and do nothing about it, the ancestors would be furious and they would kill him, hence the necessity for action on the husband's part.

837 If the husband cannot find his runaway wife, the duty of searching
684 for her and bringing her back to him falls to his father-in-law.

Formerly, before the French occupation, if the lover did not want to return the woman, her father appealed to the naba, that is, the chief of the village or canton, or even to the Moro Naba, who sent horsemen to arrest the guilty pair. He restored the wife to her husband and confiscated for his own benefit the lover's animals and millet granaries.

Nowadays, since the French occupation, one appeals to the commanding officer of the circle and to the native provincial court for the wife's return.

684 Sometimes, in the past, the husband killed his wife's lover when
643 he caught him flagrante delicto. He had the right to do so, but this caused him to lose his /246/ wife who became the property of the Moro Naba. The lover's property likewise reverted to the Moro Naba.

684 In any event, the husband did not have the right to kill his wife
643 except when she was caught flagrante delicto, unless he was the
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8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
FA28 Mossi FA28

rulers left the Dagomba region in the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) during the 11th century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers (*Moro Nabas*) who hold feudal-like control of the provinces, districts, and villages which comprise their domains. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus extends the power of the rulers into the smallest village, and funnels taxes and tribute back to them. French conquest modified this highly efficient system but did not greatly change it. The Mossi state apparatus rests on an economy which produces cotton cloth, horses, sheep, cattle, and goats, but the main support of this large population—one of the densest in the Sudan—is grain agriculture. Today, some Mossi districts still have as many as 70 persons per square mile.

The Mossi are divided into stratified royal, noble, and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sublineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there were once large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossi. Patrilocal polygynous extended family households, grouped into villages, form the basic Mossi settlement pattern. Marriages are arranged between unrelated persons through the agency of lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. The two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives, or the "friend" who has received more gifts from his opposite number will give over a wife. Because only the older men have women and goods at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives and must content themselves with occasional lovers until they inherit wives from lineage members. The Mossi have a great fear of incestuous relations which bring down the wrath of the ancestors (the *Keemsé*).

Ancestor veneration is at the core of Mossi religious behavior. The recent ancestors are notified, through sacrifices, of the important events in the lives of their descendants, and they are expected to aid in solving everyday problems. The ancestors also invoke their sanctions against antisocial behavior among their descendants. Once a year the Mossi people, in concert with the Moro Nabas, appeal to their individual and collective ancestors for good crops, large families, and for the preservation of the dynasty. Often associated with the ancestors as propitiatory agents are local deities called *Tengkougas* (sing. *Tenkougre*) or earth shrines, visibly manifested by clumps of trees, mountains, rocks, or rivers. *Tengsobas* or earth priests appeal to the Tengkougas on behalf of the local populations for help in sickness, for rain and good crops, and for children. When proper sacrifices are offered to the Tengkougas, their spiritual agents, called *kinkirsé*, enter the wombs of women and are born as children. Twins and children who die young are regarded as "evil" kinkirsé who entered a woman without being invited. Nevertheless, many persons consider twins as special gifts to parents in favor of the earth deities.

The earth itself, *Tenga*, is one of the principal deities of the Mossi. Tenga is

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
FA28 Mossi FA28

776 considered the wife of a male deity called *Winnam*, *Windé*, or *Naba Zidiwindé*. The true nature of Winnam is not clear. The Mossi say: "Winnam is the sun, and Winnam is God"; he is considered a sun god as well as a supreme deity. [775] Winnam is venerated but he is not feared, because it is the dead ancestors who chastise evil-doers by affliction or death. When wicked people die they face the wrath of the ancestors in *Keemsétenga*, or land of the ancestors.

774 The Mossi have several concepts of the spiritual essence or animating principle of man. First there is the *seega* (pl. *seesé*), an entity found in all living beings; it leaves the body during sleep, and its adventures provide the dreams of men. The seega can be captured during its nocturnal wanderings or in places [761] where large crowds congregate. If the seega is captured and eaten by a sorcerer, its owner will die. A man's shadow is also called his seega; persons about to die have no shadows, since their seesé have either been stolen or have [822] left on their own account.

775 Another principle called the *keema* (pl. *keemsé*) is associated with the dead or with persons about to die. The keema of a dying man wanders around and often frightens people; as soon as he is dead, he is no longer referred to by name but is called the "keema." Keemsé is also the word used for the generalized [769] ancestors who sanction the behavior of the living and who must be placated if people wish to have enough food, wives, children, and good health. A man's own keemsé take a vital interest in his affairs, in return for which they receive nourishment in the form of the seesé (animals do not have keemsé) of sacrificed animals.

[827] The breath, called *vousem*, is also considered an animating principle by the Mossi and, since it leaves the body through the nose at death, they believe that a man's nose is the first thing to die. It is not clear how the seega is disposed of when the body dies. Some people say it remains forever about the haunts of man; others believe that it goes to a mountain called Plimpikou and disappears into a cavern. Still others believe that the seega becomes the keema and goes to Plimpikou, from whence the keemsé come to visit their descendants. It is difficult to determine whether the Mossi have always been vague about their traditional religious concepts or whether this uncertainty is the result of the influx of such foreign creeds as Islam and Christianity.

175 The first recorded contact between the Mossi and Moslems took place around 1328 when the Yatenga Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu, 797 then held by the Dia dynasty of the Songhoi (Dubois 1896:251). For more than a century afterward, the Mossi pursued a turbulent and aggressive policy in the region of the Niger bend, pushing as far as Gourma, Wàlata, and Banku (ibid:127). They were finally defeated and routed by Sonni Ali in 1477. In 1499, when Askia the Great (El Hadj Mohammed ben Abou Bekr, usurper of the Songhoi throne from the Sonni dynasty in 1494) returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca, he launched a *jihad* or holy war on the Mossi who had rejected his ultimatum to adopt Islam. Askia defeated the Mossi, "devastated the towns and countryside, took men, women, and children as prisoners, and forcibly converted these captives to Islam" (Dubois 1896:127–128). The

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
FA28 Mossi FA28

175 797 871 schools and 4,000 Moslems in Ouagadougou (seven percent of whom were non-Mossi). By 1944 there were about 240 schools and approximately 25,000 Moslems. The last census, 1954, did not record the number of Koranic schools but gave the figure of 60,000 Moslems in the Ouagadougou region.[3] The 4,000 Moslems of Nobéré comprise 42 percent of that district's population. With the exception of one Catholic school master and the Catholic catechist who came to the district during 1956, the population is pagan. It might be relevant to point out that Nobéré has the highest percentage of Moslems in Kombissiri, an administrative unit (a subdivision) which has 152,000 pagans, 23,000 Moslems, 3,000 Catholics, and about 100 Protestants.

797 634 As noted above, Islam first came into the Nobéré district with Ngado, who replaced a dissident pagan chief, but Ngado's lineal descendants reverted to paganism until a few years ago when the present district chief became a nominal Moslem. The cadet sons of Ngado did not revert to paganism, and today all the noble sublineages of the district are Moslem. We may note here that one of the main aspects of Islamic proselytization in this district, as elsewhere among the Mossi, has been the conversion of persons who do not hold strategic positions vis-à-vis the ancestors. The present chief is no exception to this rule, because he is only a nominal Moslem. His eldest son is the only one in the family who is not a Moslem—a status which is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain in a growing Moslem population. The chief himself became partially converted to Islam in gratitude to a Moslem Hausa trader who cured his illness. He recites the five daily prayers and observes most of the prescriptions of Islam, but he still drinks European beer, subscribes to many pagan rites and [769] beliefs, and supervises the annual Péléga or sacrifice to the ancestors. This dual allegiance is politically expedient because the chief can function as the head of the Moslem community as well as the traditional head of all the people. He does have occasional difficulty with intolerant Moslems who wish him to become a devout Moslem, and with the traditionalists who claim that today the crops are smaller, the people sicker, and the women barren because of the neglect of the ancestors. However, with the approach of holy days, these differences are resolved in the interest of community harmony.

622 797 769 The chiefs of the villages under the overall command of the district chief are mainly pagan, since they are descended from the district chief replaced by Ngado. Yet they command villages inhabited by the noble Moslem sublineages of the ruling house as well as by commoner lineages. The village chief cannot become a Moslem because he too is responsible for sacrifices to the ancestors, without whose help his people would suffer. He does not take an active part in Moslem festivities, but receives the homage due a chief from the Moslems on these and other occasions. However, most village chiefs show an interest in Moslem affairs, and one of them, the chief of Vooko, built a prayer-circle (*misseri*) for Moslems who came to pay homage.

622 797 582 The pivotal role which the village chief plays in the exchange of wives between Moslems and pagans has led indirectly to the increase of the Moslem population. Before the French conquest he gave the Moslems more wives than

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
FA28 Mossi FA28

797 555 administration to have one of their converts, a younger son of the late chief, elected to the district chieftainship over his elder brother. This belief is probably unfounded, since the Moro Naba seems to be electing the literate sons of chiefs to their fathers' positions so that educated chiefs, and not educated commoners, can serve as members of French parliamentary bodies. Unfortunately, the people of Manga do not understand modern political problems, and have accepted the new chief only because of their traditional respect for the chieftainship.

634 797 ●769 [602] The conversion of the Manga chief to Catholicism has not engendered many problems for his pagan subjects. The chief's primary duty—to begin the yearly ceremonial cycle of sacrifices to the ancestors—has been taken over by his father's brother, who is now considered the ritual head of the chiefly lineage. Nevertheless, to the chief still accrue the gains of this ceremony because his followers pay him homage and bring him gifts on his birthday, which comes at this period. Moslems in the community also pay their respects at this time, and they prefer his Catholic birthday celebration to the bloody sacrifices of chickens to the ancestors. On the other hand, the chief shows little of the common Catholic disapproval of Moslems and sends gifts to their leaders on the Moslem feast days. He also entertains the district Moslems when they come to pay him homage.

797 634 582 The Catholic chief does not act as a pivot in the exchange of wives between pagans of his lineage and the other lineages. This task now falls to his father's brothers. Nevertheless, as district chief he is constantly involved with the marital problems involving pagan parents and their Catholic children. The main source of the difficulty is that Catholic girls are encouraged to refuse to join their pagan husbands when so ordered by their parents. The mission not only insists that the girl freely choose her own husband, but encourages her to reject a polygynous union. Catholicism thereby interposes itself between the girls and their society, not only impairing the prestige of their fathers and lineages but also giving the girls more freedom than they would ordinarily possess. [562]

The pagans claim that by encouraging girls to choose mates without parental consent, the Catholics are really taking the opportunity to obtain wives for young Catholic men. Paradoxically, there seems to be some truth in this, since Bouniol, a White Father, states:

> A Mossi who is unable to acquire a wife by [traditional] means must either remain unmarried or seduce another man's wife . . . they must choose between celibacy and immorality.
>
> Such a state of affairs creates many problems for the missions, especially as the system is recognized and sanctioned by the colonial authorities. . . . Young native Christians are obviously placed in a very awkward position. Their conversion angers their parents, who refuse to give them a wife; neither will their friends bestow a daughter upon them, because they know that they will not receive one in return, since a Christian may not give a daughter in marriage to a pagan. . . . *Consequently, unless the missionaries help them to find a wife, they must remain unmarried—a very discouraging prospect!* (1920:160 italics mine)

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957)1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

636
646 the Kaya people to their new chief. However, in Manga the proposed
666 election of a young chief over his four elder brothers did cause some
662 concern and talk about Catholic machinations because the nominee was of that faith. But there was no overt opposition to him once he had been elected. His elder brother accepted the wishes of the Moro Naba with good graces even though he remains a rather tragic individual.

643 The differential treatment that the Manga Naba receives from the
636 administration is obvious to everyone. Whereas the other district chiefs are still summarily summoned to the administrative center, and kept waiting, the Manga Naba sends his assistants to represent him. When the Governor of the Haute Volta came to Manga to make it an administrative subdivision, he was entertained by the Manga Naba while the neighboring district chiefs celebrated outside. It was the political power of this educated chief which was responsible for Manga becoming an administrative subdivision even though it is located several miles from the highway which runs between Wagadougou and Ghana. Furthermore, the population of the neighboring district all complain that Manga's population has gained a disproportionate share of all the services provided by the governmental agencies whose headquarters are there. The fears which the Manga people and the other Mossi have had over their chiefs being Catholic have not materialized in Manga. Of course, the Manga Naba does perform the rituals on the
● [769] day of the ancestral feasts. These rites are now being performed by his father's brother who has become the ritual head of the ruling lineage (and it is possible that this line may become the line which performs this task for the now "secular" chief). However, when the
[797] chief celebrates the anniversary of his conversion to Catholicism at the mission, afterwards he holds court in his house where he receives from Catholics, Moslems, and pagans alike, the gifts he normally would have received in the feast of the ancestors.[6]

The most important function of such Mossi chiefs as the Manga Naba is to defend the interests of the Mossi people in the territorial assemblies and the French councils and assemblies while preserving the ruling tradition of the descendants of Wedraogo and Wubri. In his capacity as politician-chief, the Manga Naba joined a fellow Mossi of rather humble origin in sponsoring several bills in the Assembly of

II: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

vincial minister for Djiba, and rendered homage to the sovereign. After this reception the prince went to the Gounga Naba's compound, which henceforth was his headquarters whenever he visited Ouagadougou; for, like other district chiefs, he had to consult with this minister before seeing the monarch. Everyone in the kingdom had to follow the political hierarchy, even the ruler's heir.

The young prince remained at his host's house and from there visited the other important officials, in the order of their rank, receiving from each presents of sheep, millet beer, kola nuts, and sometimes wives. He then visited the Imam of the Ouagadougou Moslem community, where he received a blessing in the name of Allah and was given kola nuts and millet water sweetened with honey. On the fourth or fifth day the prince went to a small village called Zoangha, where he made a sacrifice to his ancestors and requested their protection against all enemies.[29] He returned to Ouagadougou on the same day and was given a palace escort to accompany him to his district.

During his journey, the royal heir had the opportunity to establish or re-establish friendly relations with district chiefs who were now his peers, but who might someday become his subjects. He visited in turn the war leader at Tansobatenga, the Koubri Naba, the Ipelse Naba, and the Kondrin Naba. Each of these chiefs offered him livestock, slaves, and wives. He, in turn, distributed salt (a valuable commodity) to the old women and gave kola nuts and other commodities to the chiefs' head wives. The Baganmini Naba presented the prince with a special quiver of arrows, and the chief of the Fulani at Bedego gave him a pretty maiden and one of his best bulls. The prince spent a few days with each of his hosts, but stayed for seven days in Bere, a district bordering on his own. The Bere Naba gave him a wife, a robe, and a cow, and sent messengers to the village chiefs of Djiba to announce that their chief had arrived in Bere. The chiefs then journeyed to Bere, pledged allegiance to their ruler, and presented gifts to him. On the seventh night there was a ritual (whose main features are unclear), in the course of which the prince entered Djiba secretly on horseback, accompanied only by one servant, one groom, and the nobles and chiefs of Djiba.[30] Most members of the escort who had accompanied him from the capital were left behind at Bere, and followed only when the prince had established himself in his district. When the prince's band entered Djiba under cover of darkness, it was met by the local Ouidi Naba, who ruled the district in the absence of a Crown Prince. The Ouidi Naba now became the prince's protector if the boy were still young, or his most trusted adviser if he were old enough to rule by himself.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

[P. 60]

IV

ADMINISTRATION

642 631 [825] [769] THE MOSSI always looked to their rulers, especially to the Mogho Nanamse, the Dimdamba, and the Kombemba, to determine administrative policies and to pronounce on all relevant issues. All foreigners who requested information were told, "You must talk to the chief."[1] The Mossi believed that men cannot live without chiefs, and insisted that even animals have chiefs. Mossi rulers were therefore expected to ensure internal tranquillity in times of peace and to protect their subjects and territories in times of war. The expectation that they would also provide impartial judgment is best expressed by a dictum of the Ouagadougou people: "The truth is at Ouagadougou." Finally, Mossi chiefs were held responsible for inducing the ancestors to bring health and prosperity to their subjects. To this end, they supervised and participated in rituals to their ancestors and encouraged the people in every territory, district, village, and compound to do likewise. In return, the people paid homage and allegiance to their chiefs and provided them with the goods and services they needed to support the administrative process.

643 631 642 175 The nature of the administrative relationship between the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, the rulers of Yatenga, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo, and the autonomous Dimdamba was not clear to the early visitors to Mossi country, and remains a matter of controversy. Two conflicting principles were always at work: seniority with respect to the nam and claims of close descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri on the one hand, and relative political strength or military power on the other. The stronger a ruler, the less he deferred to his lineal seniors. He might even claim a supremacy over them that came close to a claim of seniority. When Barth visited the Sudan in 1853, he was told that the Mossi country was "split into a number of small principalities, almost totally independent of each other, and paying only slight homage to the principality of Woghodogo." Barth reports, however, that the Dim of Boussouma was "probably the most powerful of the Mossi chiefs at the . . . time, especially with regard to cavalry." Similarly,

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

less of the amount of millet harvested from the Mogho Naba's fields, there had to be one hundred baskets full of grain. If the number of baskets filled with the Mogho Naba's grain fell short of the mark, the serfs and slaves had to make up the difference with the produce of their own fields. The ceremony concluded with sacrifices to the royal ancestors, after which the Mogho Naba's wives, daughters, and sisters gave beer and kola nuts to the laborers.

As head of the central government, the Mogho Naba received revenue in the form of money and livestock which the district chiefs collected from the village people. These were given to him during an elaborate annual ceremony called the "Basgha" ("feast of the royal ancestors"). Several days before this post-harvest festival, the district chiefs and their retainers arrived in the capital and lodged with their provincial ministers. At a designated time during the ceremony, the district chiefs and nobles went to the palace. In provincial contingents and led by their ministers, they walked up to the sovereign's throne and gave the Mossi salute. After they had returned to their places, their servants gave the royal pages the presents they had brought to the palace.

The Dimdamba apparently made their annual contribution to the Mogho Naba at the time of the Basgha. There is one report that they took this opportunity to send gifts to the ruler's son, the Djiba Naba, as well. The Dimdamba customarily sent the Mogho Naba part of the goods they had seized in combat against non-Mossi peoples, as well as a tax (*jado*) out of the goods they had inherited from their predecessors.[5] There is also some evidence that the Mogho Naba solicited goods from the Dimdamba at other times. Crozat says:

> During my first visit to Yako, three envoys from Ouagadougou were at the chief's house. They were tax collectors. They had come to offer the vassal a silver bracelet sent by the sovereign. The Yako Naba responded by sending horses, captives, and cowries to Ouagadougou.[6]

Crozat could not understand this reciprocity between the Mogho Naba and his vassals, and questions whether the Mogho Naba really collected taxes from them. He concludes that the Mogho Naba did receive taxes, "but these are never given to him except in the form of presents which are reciprocated."[7] Crozat found it puzzling and disturbing that many of the Dimdambe had not given the Mogho Naba any "taxes" for several years. He indicated, moreover, that they did not wish to pay taxes to the Ouagadougou ruler even under the guise of an exchange of presents. This was especially true of the Yatenga Naba, who had not sent the Mogho Naba any presents for six or seven years prior to 1890. Crozat surmised that

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

[P.126]

VIII

RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT

796
642 RELIGION AND RITUAL played an important role in supporting and preserv-
[769] ing the Mossi political system. Religio-political ceremonies were centered
[776] around the ancestors (Keemse) and the earth deities (Tengkouga); the
otiose high god (Ouennam or Naba Zid Ouende) had a very minor role.

769 The political importance of ancestor veneration lay in the fact that every
642 Mossi chief claimed Nyennega of Dagomba and her descendants, Ouedra-
778 ogo and Oubri, as his ancestors. Furthermore, possession of the amulets of
[613] Rialle, Nyennega's husband and Ouedraogo's father, legitimized possession
of the nam. In order to rule, a Moaga had either to be a member of a royal
669 lineage still in possession of the nam or to have received the nam from such
778 a lineage. No Moaga ever tried to usurp the nam of a kingdom or princi-
642 pality without trying to steal the royal amulets at the same time; nor, if his
769 rebellion was successful, did he ever fail to claim that he had stolen the
amulets or had received them as a gift. Thus Yadega, who rebelled against
his father's brother, Mogho Naba Koudoumie, and founded the Yatenga
kingdom, declared that he had obtained Rialle's amulets. He claimed that
they had been given to him by his sister, Pabre, who had stolen them from
Ouagadougou and had thus deprived that kingdom of any legitimate sanc-
tions for power. Thus, when the Yatenga people declare that they are equal
to Ouagadougou, they add that the only "amulets" that still legitimize the
nam of the Ouagadougou dynasty are the droppings left behind by Pabre's
horse as she fled northward.

769 Similarly, all the princes who founded principalities and proclaimed
642 their independence of Ouagadougou defended their action on the grounds
643 that they, being as close to the main line of descent as the Mogho Naba,
were also entitled to rule. The younger sons of deceased Mogho Nanamse
[631] who were banished from the capital as Kouritadamba and who subse-
[634] quently became provincial Dimdamba also stressed their relationship to
the royal ancestors. Even those district chiefs whose ancestors had prob-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

ably been younger sons sent to rule in conquered territories claimed that their ancestors were direct descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri. Thus, to the Mossi, the power to rule was intimately linked to closeness of descent from the royal ancestors. The supernatural power of these ancestors, and the vigilance they were believed to maintain over the affairs of their descendants, were regarded as important factors in Mossi government.

From the moment when the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or any other Mossi ruler "drank the namtibo" and thereby received the nam of his ancestors, he had the right—indeed, the duty—to offer sacrifices to these ancestors in the name of his subjects. Every night, throughout Mossi country, the Baloum Naba of every ruler performed an act of supplication (Kwaga Basgha) to the ancestors. He beseeched them to protect the subjects of their descendants through the night, to maintain peace in Mossi country, and to grant health, children, and prosperity to all Mossi. This nightly ceremony was climaxed yearly by an elaborate ritual in honor of the ancestors (called the Basgha in some areas, and the Pelegha, Filigha, or Kinkiriga in others) that began at the highest levels of the government and ultimately linked every Mossi chief and lineage head.

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the other Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba, initiated this ceremony in his own kingdom. His celebration, called "M'barengma," was held at the end of the Mossi agricultural year and after the Soretasgho. Thus, the M'barengma was a New Year's festival in thanksgiving for good crops, as well as the annual Feast of the Dead. A few weeks before the first moon of the new year (the *ki-basgha* or *ki-pelegha*), the Mogho Naba ordered his soghondamba and samande-kamba to clean up the palace buildings and courtyards—an activity intended to notify the ever-vigilant ancestors that preparations were being made to offer sacrifices in their honor. A short time later, the Mogho Naba gave grain from his fields to the Pughtiema so she could prepare millet water for the sacrifices. Present-day Mossi insist that part of the grain came from the first ears harvested that year and part from those of the previous year. This was supposed to symbolize the continuity between crops, mirroring the continuity between the ruler and his ancestors. A few days before the principal ceremony, the Mogho Naba ordered the Larhalle Naba to pour millet water and sacrifice chickens on the graves of former Mogho Nanamse.

Shortly before the ki-basgha moon appeared, the ruler had to leave his palace at night to elude the ancestors, who had been attracted by the preparations and who were expected to be angry when they discovered that the sacrifices were not yet ready. The unjust ruler feared ancestral sanctions; the just ruler that his ancestors might want him to join them. One night he

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

went to the home of his Samande Naba, the next to the Gounghin ward, then to Baghin, and subsequently to the homes of other officials. He could not remain long at one place for fear that the ancestors might find him. Every morning, however, when the cock's crow heralded the ancestors' departure, he returned to his palace.

The principal part of the Basgha ceremony was performed on the night when the crescent moon appeared. On that night more than any other, the ruler had to seek refuge elsewhere, because the ancestors visited the palace to accept the sacrifices offered to them by the Pughtiema with the help of the Baloum Naba and the chief eunuch of the harem. The exact nature of this ceremony is unknown, but it is known that the Baloum Naba used the sacred namtibo along with animals and millet-flour water provided by the Pughtiema and the chief eunuch for propitiatory sacrifices to the ancestors. The aim of these sacrifices was to induce the ancestors to grant good crops, health, happiness, and children to their descendants, and to "increase the force of the namtibo."[1] At cock's crow the Bendere Naba sprinkled a flour infusion called *gningmassem* ("water of health") on the palace courtyard so that the ruler might walk upon it when he returned. The Mogho Naba was greeted with drumbeats and escorted to the palace gate. His entry into the antechamber marked the close of this ceremony, and the people retired until later in the day.

The elaborate public ceremony of the Basgha took place in mid-morning. The ministers and important officials, clad in ceremonial garb, arrived at the palace quite early. When the Mogho Naba appeared, the Bendere Naba recited the official genealogy, starting with Ouedraogo and Oubri and ending with elaborate praises of the current ruler. The ministers and their entourage then saluted the Mogho Naba and wished him *Ne tarbo*, which means a happy and prosperous new year for himself and the country. He, in turn, took advantage of this occasion to give many presents to his retinue, and his wives distributed huge amounts of food and drink to the assembly until everyone was satiated. Then all the officials except the Bendere Naba and his group paid homage to the Mogho Naba and departed. The musicians remained at court most of the day, beating their drums and singing praises to their sovereign and his illustrious ancestors. The royal pages kept them well supplied with food and beer, and now and again during the day the ruler sent them gifts among which robes were often included. Whenever the drummers received a gift, they slipped into a rhythmic pattern that signified: *Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss' Naba niore, Wenne wilig vinre,* or, "We bow in thanksgiving for your gift. May God give the ruler long life. May God grant us to be alive next year so that we may do this again." The

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

climax of this gift-giving came when the ruler sent the Bendere Naba about 19,000 cowries and a slave.[2] This ceremony terminated at nightfall.

The close of the Mogho Naba's Basgha heralded the start of similar ceremonies throughout his kingdom. The heads of the other Mossi kingdoms and the Dimdamba were free to hold their own Basgha when they wished; but the Ouagadougou ruler's own subjects, including the provincial ministers, district chiefs, village chiefs, and lineage heads, apparently were not. One reason for this, aside from respect for the ruler, was that the important officials' head wives had to wait for the yeast (*dabili*) from the Mogho Naba's beer before they could prepare the sacrificial offerings for their husbands' ancestors. This dabili went from district to district or to several districts at once, depending on whether the chiefs celebrated Basgha at the same time or successively. Thus, the dabili from the capital united all the wives of the royal clan, and made for both a ritual continuity in the veneration of all ancestors and a strengthening of religious and political bonds.

The Basgha ceremonies on the district level were much less elaborate than those held at Ouagadougou, but just as important. The district chief, too, had his buildings repaired and his grain distributed for sacrifices for the ancestors. A few days before the actual ceremony, he ordered the Gande Naba to pour millet water on the graves of recently deceased chiefs and to sacrifice chickens there. As in Ouagadougou, these sacrifices were offered to induce the chiefly ancestors to grant the villagers health, food, and children. Unlike the Mogho Naba, most district chiefs did not ritually hide from their ancestors for several nights prior to the ceremony. Some of them did change their sleeping place within the compound every night, and the court people always slept indoors during this period. On the night of the Basgha itself, however, the district chiefs did not sleep in their compounds.

As in Ouagadougou, the Pughtiema performed the main ceremony by pouring millet water as a libation to the ancestors who visited her hut. She was assisted by the Baloum Naba, who had possession of the namtibo. Apparently, the district chief remained in hiding and took no part in the ceremony. But he was the main figure in the morning ceremony, which differed little from that of Ouagadougou. In some districts the Tengsoba performed a public sacrifice to the ancestors. He was given the namtibo—sacred objects that had belonged to former district chiefs—and poured libations and sacrificed chickens to all of the chief's ancestors. He also prayed both to these ancestors and to his own on the chief's behalf, and beseeched them to grant long life and happiness to the district population. He also declared that the sacred objects would seek out and kill any enemies of the local ruler, wherever they might be. Once this ritual had been com-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

pleted, the remainder of the ceremony followed the pattern of the Ouagadougou ritual.

During the weeks that followed, the village chiefs and the heads of the larger lineage segments all offered sacrifices to their ancestors. The Pughtiema of each prominent local administrator, chief, or lineage head prepared and poured the millet water as a libation to the ancestors. Whenever possible, each of these personages invited musicians to sing praises to his ancestors. He dressed in his best robe and sat outside his hut to receive presents from his relatives, friends, and subjects, along with their best wishes for the new year, and for long life and prosperity. In return he gave them kola nuts, beer, and food. Thus, in celebrating the Basgha, all the Mossi were united in prayers and supplications to the ancestors, upon whom rested the future of their country and the successful reign of the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The earth deity, Tenga, held the central place in the second major religio-political ceremony which linked all Mossi. This ritual, called *Tense* (from *tenga*, "earth") and sometimes *Naba Oubri ma koure* ("the anniversary of the funeral of Mogho Naba Oubri's mother"), was so important to Mossi cohesion that it was banned by the French, and as a result its main features are now unclear. According to tradition, Naba Oubri loved Poughtoenga, his Ninisi mother, so much, and was so pleased with the elaborate funeral he gave her, that he decided to repeat this ceremony each year in the hope that his subjects would be blessed with the bountiful crops and herds which had made the first one possible. Curiously enough, Oubri's mother was not a central figure in the Tense celebration. Instead, great stress was placed on the fructifying powers of the earth and on the importance of the royal ancestors in Mossi life. The juxtaposition and association of the earth deity with Oubri's mother has important implications for the Mossi political organization. Mossi tradition holds that a Ninisi woman was the ancestress of the Mossi of Ouagadougou. Her people probably celebrated the Tense as a fertility rite to their earth goddess, Tenga. The Mossi apparently took over the ceremony and used it both as a fertility rite and as a memorial festival, thus symbolically uniting the conquerors and the conquered.[3]

In contrast to the Basgha, no special date appears to have been set for the celebration of the Tense. It was held sometime before the crops were sowed, but according to Tauxier it was not celebrated at all in Ouagadougou when the previous year's harvest had been poor.[4] Before setting the date for the festival, the Mogho Naba summoned the Larhalle Naba and ordered him to have sacrifices made on the graves of all former rulers. This minister

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

provided the sacrificial animals for the royal tombs in the area of the capital, and the Ouagadougou Naba, as chief Tengsoba, performed the sacrifices. The Larhalle Naba also dispatched his servants to the distant districts where royal tombs were located, with orders to obtain (by force, if necessary) the animals for the sacrifices from the local populations and give them to the special guardians of the tombs. Sacrifices were made on the grave of Naba Oubri at Koudougou and on that of his father, Zoungourana, in the village of Zomtoega in Tenkodogo. However, there is no indication that a sacrifice was made on the grave of Ouedraogo, who is believed to have died in Sagabatenga but whose burial place is unknown. Nor is it clear whether, as some Mossi claim, annual sacrifices were made on the alleged grave of Nyennega in Gambaga. As soon as these preparatory sacrifices had been completed and the Mogho Naba had been notified, preparations were made for the celebration.

The Mogho Naba met with the Larhalle Naba, and the date of the Tense was set for twenty-one days after the meeting. On the following day, the Larhalle Naba made five cords out of tree bark and tied nineteen knots in each of them. The next day, he gave each provincial minister a cord to send to the districts in his province. The provincial ministers then sent their messengers with the cords to the districts, with orders to untie one knot every day the cords were in transit. Thus a district chief, counting the number of knots in the cord on the day it reached him, knew how many days were left before the Tense. As soon as the entire kingdom had been notified of the festival, the envoys returned to Ouagadougou and returned the cords to their ministers.

On the Friday morning before the Tense, the Larhalle Naba went to the palace. Kneeling before the monarch, he untied the last knot on each cord to indicate that the ceremony would begin on the morrow. To acknowledge this fact, the Mogho Naba distributed bars of salt to his courtiers and visitors instead of the customary kola nuts, beer, and millet water. Visitors left the court early in order to provide their families with foodstuffs for the celebration.

Early on Saturday morning, royal servants brought huge quantities of beef and mutton that had been cooked without pepper (this spice being disliked by the ancestors) and other foods, and deposited them in large heaps in the courtyard. Nearby, they also placed numerous large pots of millet beer. As soon as the morning ceremony was over, the Larhalle Naba slowly approached the Mogho Naba, who presented him with a new white robe. The minister donned the robe and walked to the piles of food, from which he took three portions of millet mush, dipped them in a specially

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

prepared sauce, and flung them in three directions to the waiting ancestral spirits. He then beseeched the royal spirits, the spirits of former provincial ministers, and the spirits of the ancient people (the Ninisi) to grant a long life to the Mogho Naba and peace to all the Mossi. He repeated the ritual with three morsels of meat and with the contents of a pot of beer. When he had finished, the Gande Naba picked up the food thrown to the ancestors and carried it away. He did not look backward for fear that he should see the ancestors and die as a result. The departure of the Gande Naba was the signal for the palace retainers to rush toward the food. They seized and ate what they could, spilling and wasting a good deal in the process.[5]

Meanwhile, chiefs and headmen held similar ceremonies in every district, village, hamlet, and compound in the Ouagadougou kingdom. District and village chiefs offered sacrifices to their ancestors in the name of their subjects. The sacrifices on the hamlet and compound level were more specific. Every grown man had to take a sheep, goat, or chicken to his elder and request that it be offered to the ancestors in his name. The elder sacrificed the animal and beseeched the ancestors to grant the petitioner good health, bountiful crops, and many children during the coming year. The women and children did not take part in the ritual, but they did participate in the general feasting that followed.

The festivities of the Tense lasted only a few days in the districts and villages, but in the capital it did not end officially until about four weeks had elapsed. At the end of this period, the Larhalle Naba gave the Mogho Naba all the cords that had been used to mark the coming of the Tense. A few days later, the chief Tengsoba of Guillingou, the native village of Oubri's mother, and the Tengsobadamba of other important ceremonial centers, visited the Mogho Naba in the palace courtyard. Here they all sacrificed white cocks and placed the blood and feathers of their victims on their ceremonial axes in order to "increase the power" of these objects. Later on, they were given cooked mutton, millet cakes, and other presents. Their departure for home later in the day marked the close of the Tense.

The religio-political function of the Tense is quite explicit, despite the statement by Dim Delobson, himself a Mossi chief (but also a convert to Catholicism), that "it is apparent that this festival has no outstanding features. Its sole aim is to make peace between the living and the dead, and, in the process, to allow everyone to enjoy the food."[6] Judging by the reports of old men who participated in the festival before it was banned, the people did have a good time and enjoyed the food. What is important, however, is that like the Basgha, the Tense served not only "to make peace

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

between the living and the dead," but also to strengthen the political bonds between the Mogho Naba and his chiefs, down to the humblest elder of a Mossi compound.

In addition to the Basgha and Tense, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou appears to have offered another yearly sacrifice to Tenga. Each year, after the Basgha, the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and a large entourage reportedly visited a large earth shrine called Tantibo in the vicinity of Sabatenga to offer propitiatory sacrifices in the name of all the people. When the royal party arrived at Sabatenga, they were joined by the Sabatenga Naba and his Tengsoba. The group proceeded to the foot of the sacred hill, and here the monarch dismounted, took off his bonnet and shoes, and climbed the hill. He made the customary Mossi salute at the shrine and looked on silently while the Tengsoba sacrificed animals and poured libations of millet beer and millet water in supplication for the health and prosperity of the Mogho Naba and all his people.[7]

When evil befell Mossi country in spite of the annual sacrifices to the ancestors and to the earth deity, the Mogho Naba had to offer additional sacrifices. If the country was plagued by drought, the ruler went to an earth shrine in Ouagadougou itself, called "Kom be paspanga" (literally, "water is strong there"), for a sacrifice. Moreover, he might order all his district and village chiefs to perform similar sacrifices to the earth shrines within their territories. In Nobere district, for instance, the district chief went to the village called Barkago, where, standing barefoot and bareheaded on the hilly shrine known as Beta, he ordered the local village chief and the Tengsoba to offer sacrifices for rain and good health.

It is generally believed by the Mossi that when the French attacked Ouagadougou, the deposed Mogho Naba Wobogo made sacrifices to earth shrines. Tradition has it that he sacrificed a black cock, a black ram, a black donkey, and a black slave on a large hill near the White Volta River, beseeching the earth goddess to drive the French away and to destroy the traitor Mazi whom they had placed upon the throne. When Mazi died, the Mossi people believed that he had received his just deserts from the earth shrine for treason. The French believe that Mazi was poisoned.[8]

The district and village chiefs, like the Mogho Naba, were required to make propitiatory sacrifices to the earth shrines on behalf of their subjects. Before taking office, a district chief was ritually shown the major earth shrines in his territory, and he could not ignore their existence and their need for sacrifices. In a country with major local variations in rainfall and localized animal and human epidemics, the Tengsobadamba of stricken areas always called upon the local chiefs to help them propitiate disgruntled spirits.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?" the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capitals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance, is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Christians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional ancestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies except those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more persons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*